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example, in *Orion*, *Perseus* and *Auriga (Erichthonius)*, the latter almost incredible and not worthy of a DÜRER. Remark, also, the head-gear of the four astronomers in the corners! Those of MANILIUS and of AL SUFI may be all right; but that PTOLEMY should have worn a beaver-hat, or ARATUS what looks almost like a derby, one cannot well imagine! In the left-hand lower corner of the map for the southern hemisphere you will find the names of the authors—STABIUS, HEINFOGEL and DÜRER—and what each of them has contributed to the work."

I am sure that my friend Dr. PETERS will allow me to print this private note on a very interesting portion of the history of astronomy about which his ripe scholarship allows him to speak with authority.

W. M. CONWAY, Esq., of London, author of a work on DÜRER, kindly writes me to say that THAUSING'S Life of DÜRER (II, 122, 123, 180) refers to the maps in question. E. S. H.

REPORTS OF THE SOLAR ECLIPSES OF JANUARY AND OF DECEMBER, 1889.

The edition of the report of the eclipse of January, 1889 has been distributed, and there are no more copies on hand. The report on the December eclipse is in course of preparation. It will probably contain:

I. Reports on the Total Solar Eclipse of December, 1889, by Messrs. HOLDEN, BURNHAM, SCHAEBERLE, BARNARD.

II. Reports on the Total Eclipse of the Moon of July, 1888, by all the astronomers.

III. Catalogue of the Library of the Lick Observatory, by EDWARD S. HOLDEN. It will be illustrated with silver prints from the eclipse negatives and from drawings, etc. E. S. H.

"THE CALIFORNIA EARTHQUAKES (1850–88) AND THEIR RELATION TO ECLIPSES OF THE SUN AND MOON."

[BY DR. F. K. GINZEL].

Under this title Dr. GINZEL (Astronomer in the Royal Observatory of Berlin) has printed two articles in *Himmel und Erde* for March and April, 1890, to which attention is called. The immediate object of Dr. GINZEL'S essay is to demolish the theory by which Dr. FALB of Vienna claims to *predict* earthquakes; and this object is accomplished in a neat, workmanlike and unanswerable manner. His discussion of the data has a wider interest than this however, and his remarks upon the philosophy of scientific method in general, are of permanent value. This is not the place to do more than to direct attention to this essay, which will have both a local and a general interest to our members. E. S. H.

VARIATIONS IN THE LATITUDES OF BERLIN, POTSDAM, PRAGUE AND STRASSBURG.

It is known that the four observatories named are making simultaneous determinations of their latitudes (by TALCOTT'S method) for the detection of short-period variations in this element. During the first half of 1889 no variations were found. The observations of the last half of the year seem to show that there has been a diminution of the latitude at all these observatories, amounting to about half a second of arc. The work is to be continued.

The observatories of Pulkowa, Copenhagen, Upsala and Lund are engaged in observations to determine the long-period changes of latitude, if such exist.

THE LATITUDE OF KOENIGSBERG.

Dr. RAHTS has compared his recent observations of *Polaris* with those of BESSEL, with the object of detecting any change in the latitude of Koenigsberg in the past forty years. Professor BRUNS of Leipzig, has reviewed Dr. RAHTS' memoir in the *V. J. S. der Ast. Gesell.*, vol. 25, p. 15; and the following is a free translation of his remarks on the nature of this problem:

"It is theoretically certain that the latitudes of stations on the earth are subject to variation, just as all other data which depend on the arrangements of the masses of matter in the earth's interior.

"A whole series of processes can be named, any one of which necessitates a corresponding change in the latitude. Furthermore, it is certain, empirically, that these changes, so far as they are to be detected at all, at present attain only such magnitudes as are just barely measurable with the extreme delicacy of modern observations. If now we wish to investigate variations of the latitude, and to be independent of assumed values for the declinations of stars, we must have recourse to measures of the meridian-zenith-distances of circumpolar stars, since, for known reasons, observations of the sun are of less precision.

"The value of the latitude depends, therefore, directly on the amount of the refraction at the zenith-distance of the pole. If, then,